

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

OUTLINE FOR COOPERATIVE WORK BETWEEN
THE USDA AND TOWN-COUNTRY CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS 1/

Background Situation

For many years agencies of the Department of Agriculture have been working with rural or town-country departments of various church organizations and rural life associations. Members of the Department have a concern for working with the rural church as a community institution in serving farm people, for frequently it occupies a leadership position in the community.

At the same time leaders in national church program responsibilities are requesting increased services from agricultural sources. They desire to be kept current on the resources of the Department in terms of programs, materials, personnel and assistance in keeping up with the changing scene of rural life, government organization, Department programs and personnel.

However, in many instances our staff or the church people are uncertain as to how to best work with one another because of not being sufficiently familiar with respective programs and lines of communication to render as effective service as each might desire.

In order to carry out the Department's responsibilities additional attention is to be given to meeting this need. This includes establishing a focal point of contact and working relationships with national town-country church leaders and state and national denominational and interdenominational organizations. This will provide greater opportunities for understanding, for exchange of ideas, and for mutual supporting efforts by persons in the Department and by persons in the town-country church organizations.

A tentative list of objectives and practical activities are outlined below as a basis for this work. Included are both those which are a part of the overall

1/ Prepared by Phillip F. Aylesworth, Assistant in Program Relationships and
E. J. Niederfrank, Extension Sociologist.

responsibility for the Department as a whole and those which are normally carried on as a part of regular professional assistance to States and rural groups. Most of them are not new; the Department has had contact with, and provided information and professional assistance relating to agricultural programs and problems, to national church organizations and state agricultural college rural church projects for many years.

Objectives and Functions

1. Provide a focal point through which church organizations may better work with the Department and its respective agencies.
2. Build working relationships with town-country church leaders and organizations and help them better understand USDA programs and rural problems.
3. Provide training and educational assistance in given fields of subject matter or programs that relate to the church as a community institution and concern of rural people.
4. Support cooperative research relating to church and community and make available research results, as a part of the total program of the Department.
5. Support spiritual emphasis in the enrichment of rural life.

Activities

1. Keep a current picture of resources of the Department in terms of program materials and personnel before church organizations through publications, correspondence, conferences, and personnel contacts.
2. Maintain a mailing list of National rural church leaders to whom to send appropriate USDA materials.
3. Counsel with agencies and particular staff members of the Department in their present efforts and in developing additional opportunities for serving farm people through churches.
4. Attend certain conferences and gatherings of church groups in order to be better informed about and to more effectively serve this clientele.
5. Represent the Department at national and State town-country church conferences.

932751

6. Arrange for USDA seminars and workshops for rural church leaders, of which several are already held annually.
7. Help relate church leadership to overall Department programs where a coordinated effort by several agencies of the Department is involved and where the program is of special significance to rural churches. (e.g. Rural Development)
8. Serve in other ways as a connecting link in a two-way flow of ideas, problems, and information relating to Department programs, churches and community life.
9. Serve as resource personnel for conferences, workshops, program activities for short courses, institutes and other town-country clergymen and church organizations.
10. Work with land-grant colleges in a liaison capacity in enlisting their facilities and personnel for seminars and training courses for rural church clergy and lay leaders.
11. Prepare or arrange upon request the preparation of specific publications pertaining to town-country churches. Also arrange for preparation of Department program materials especially designed for use through this channel of communication.
12. Assist church groups to make necessary contacts with other departments and agencies outside Agriculture in accordance with problems or subjects encountered.
13. Provide training and assistance in applied sociology, such as in church-community relations, community organization, human development, group processes, leadership and effective organizations.
14. Provide socio-economic subject matter, such as on social trends, population changes, economic problems and developments, and implications for local organizations and churches.
15. Serve as resource person or consultant to national town-country church committees, church development programs, or similar efforts.
16. Arrange for helpful materials for use with Rural life Sunday, Soil Stewardship Week, and the like.
17. Aid in the effective utilization of such efforts as the 4-H Spiritual Emphasis program.
18. Assist and support state extension personnel in their work with rural churches.

Several of the aforementioned activities include both liaison and subject of a liaison nature or matter considerations, while others are specifically of a subject matter nature.

This means that two or more persons may sometimes be involved in Department work

relating to churches, perhaps even within extension. It will be a matter of each complimenting and supporting the efforts of one another.

One person has been currently assigned the function of general liaison to serve as the focal center for general contacts between church people and the Department. Examples of primarily liaison activities are Items 1 - 8 in the aforementioned list. Some of these will require inter-agency considerations, while others will especially require joint collaboration within extension.

Examples of activities performed primarily by subject matter personnel in the Department are Items 13 through 18. Much of what has been done on these in the past has been done by the Extension Rural Sociologist in providing rural life subject matter, in serving as a resource person, in aiding in the development of leadership and training, in relating the extension program to community development and to the church as a community institution, and in generally assisting and supporting State extension personnel in their work with rural churches. But this work has necessarily been limited.

It is hoped that the new arrangement will make liaison and cooperative work with more church organizations easier and more effective for better service to rural people.

AEP-150 (8-57)

